Whether We Show You or Take You to Us

The scales for humans differ from the scales for Allah. Allah is the Lord of the skies and the earth and everything in between, and the Lord of life and the afterlife, and He knows best, while humans are mere creations of His, and they only know little, and along this, ignorance and shortsightedness is their nature. And among the varying scales between Allah and human, is the scale of winning, and despite that Allah clarified it in His wise book, most people still do not understand nor believe.

The majority of people today see winning can only be with victory and control, while they consider getting killed before achieving that a failure and a loss. That is why we hear and see the hopeless and defeated poke at the mujahidin after they were killed by their enemies, and they wonder: what did they accomplish? What did they gain? They got killed for what?! How miserable these statements are, the statements of hypocrisy and lowly calculations.

The Qur'an has determined what true winning is, when Allah spoke to His worshipers saying: "O you who believe! Do not be like those who disbelieved, and said of their brethren who marched in the land, or went on the offensive, 'Had they stayed with us, they would not have died or been killed'" (Al Imran: 156). Allah forbids us from resembling the hypocrites who protested Allah's destiny! And told of their brothers who went out for trade or on the offensive and got killed: "Had they stayed with us, they would not have died or been killed". Then Allah showed us the true scale where we can weigh life and death, and He is the Life-giving and Everlasting. He said: "If you are killed in the cause of Allah, or die—forgiveness and mercy from Allah are better than what they hoard" (Al Imran: 157). Being killed and dying for the sake of Allah is best, and it is better than then spoils captured by the living, and it is better than anything and everything the hoarders can gather in this life.

Deadlines are predetermined, and whoever gets killed or dies will return to Allah without doubt. A worshiper cannot control the time of his death, but he can choose the path for which he could lose his life or spill his blood: is it the path of Allah or the path of the taghut? There are two paths with no third.

This Ayah was revealed regarding the battle of Uhud, where 70 of the Sahabah were killed, may Allah be pleased with them. It is a great loss when weighing on the people's scales today, so Allah wanted to guide the believers to the correct scales and metrics to weigh and differentiate between a win and a loss, and to guide them on how to deal with these situations, which will repeat again and again during the ongoing battle between the camps of faith and kufr.

The blessed Qur'an also mentioned examples for true winning that occurred in older Ummahs, to remind who seeks reminders. Among those examples is the story of the wizards who were invited by Pharaoh to defeat Musa (peace be upon him). When they arrived the challenge began, and they quickly knelled and submitted to Allah as believers. Pharaoh threatened them that he would kill and torture them, but they would not shake after they realized the truth, saying steady, and said: "It is to our Lord that we will return. You are taking vengeance on us only because we have believed in the signs of our Lord when they have come to us. Our Lord! Pour out patience upon us, and receive our souls in submission" (Al-A'raf: 126-125). They were killed that same day, may Allah be pleased with them. Ibn Kathir, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "They were wizards in the beginning of the day, and by the end they became blessed martyrs". Those believed in Allah for less than a day! So what did they gain and what victory did they achieve? They won shahadah for the sake of Allah, and they were victorious when they remained steady on their faith until they were all killed. Musa (peace be upon him) did not tell them then that you caused your own doom by your recklessness and provocation of the taghut Pharaoh the tyrant. This isn't the scale of the people of the afterlife, and these will never be their calculations.

Another example for the scale of winning, is the story of the people of Ukhdud, whom Allah presented as an example recited in the Qur'an until the Day of Judgement in winning and steadiness. These righteous folks did not spend much time between announcing: "We believe in the Lord of this boy" and being thrown into the fire-pit, and they did not witness a victory for the believers and defeat for the kuffar. And despite that, Allah described their end with words He did not use elsewhere, saying: "That is the great win". Their death was not just a win, it was a great win, so contemplate.

The Islamic State and its citizens have revived these elegant principles in our time, like what happened in al-Baghouz and Mosul and others, may Allah accept them, where they were exterminated by the airplanes of the Romans and the Persians, and their bodies were burnt and their homes destroyed, only because they believed in Allah alone and did not follow the tawaghit of the earth. Isn't that a great win, by Allah's grace?

This does not mean that Allah will not destroy those who disbelieved and aggressed and murdered the worshipers of Allah. May Allah forbid that. He is the Judge and the Fair, and the Strong and Mighty, and He said, after mentioning the story of the people of Ukhdud: "The onslaught of your Lord is severe" (Al-Buruj: 12). At-Tabari commented in his Tafseer of this Ayah, saying: "It is a warning from Allah for the people of His Prophet ﷺ, that they might get the same torment and indignation that the people of Ukhdud received for their kufr." And so was the end of the pharaoh who killed the wizards after they believed, it was dire, and remained an example till this day.

Not all worshipers of Allah are meant to witness the end of the kuffar, as many of them will perish before that, like Allah told His Prophet ﷺ: "So be patient. The promise of Allah is true. Whether We show you some of what We have promised them, or take you to Us, to Us they will be returned" (Ghafir: 77). At-Tabari said: "Meaning: we either will show you - O Muhammad - in your life some of the torment we prepared for these mushrikin, or we take you to us before they get it". And if victory was the true win, then Allah would not have taken His Messenger until He shows him the end of the kuffar and the ruling of the Muslims of the world. And if this was the true win, the Prophet ﷺ would have chosen to witness the defeat of the Persians and the Romans instead of the supreme companion.

Paradise is the reward for jihad and it is the great win which the verses of the Qur'an that incite for it mentioned. Victory is only "another reward that is urgent which you like, with the reward of the afterlife", like Allah mentioned after saying: "And into beautiful mansions in the Gardens of Eden. That is the supreme success," and He said: "And something else you love: support from Allah, and imminent victory. So give good news to the believers". Ibn Kathir said: "Meaning: I will add you to that something which you love, a victory from Allah". This is the scale of Allah and His fair ruling, so what scale do you measure with?